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Foolscap Paradise

The Johnson Administration is clearly losing its campaign against documentary inflation. Despite the President's orders to curb what he calls "paperwork run wild," the new agencies, new projects and new functions of the Great Society are piling up Himalayas of foolscap. The House Subcommittee on Census and Statistics, which last week ended a round of hearings on the subject (also voluminous), showed that the Government now prints twelve different forms each year for every American, circulates more than a billion all told, many for eventual return and storage. Washington spends \$7 billion annually to make, process and store this material, which totals some 25.5 million cu. ft.—much of it crammed into the Federal Government's 4,000,000 file cabinets.

A single project for a Pentagon airplane design produced 35 tons of documents that took 400 Government employees five months to read and evaluate. Sixty federal agencies have issued at least 1,000 different regulations on the hundreds of types of records that private companies must keep, and the task of filling out Government forms now takes them 95 million man-hours yearly, an 8% increase since 1964. Among the documents required by the Government are the 117 forms that it takes for each ship to enter and clear a U.S. port, some written in language that goes back unchanged to 1799. One of these commits every vessel to include in the crew's mess each Sunday "1 ounce of coffee (green berry), 1 pint of molasses, four ounces of onions and one ounce of lard."

A potential hope of defusing the paper explosion is a campaign by the Budget Bureau to make all federal agencies reduce their output of pulp—an effort marshaled by the inauspiciously named Committee to Review the Scope and Effectiveness of Efforts to Minimize Paperwork. Meanwhile, the subcommittee plans to issue a report of its hearings entitled "The Federal Paperwork Jungle," which is expected to consist of more than 200 pages and have an initial press run of 3,000 copies.

THE CONGRESS

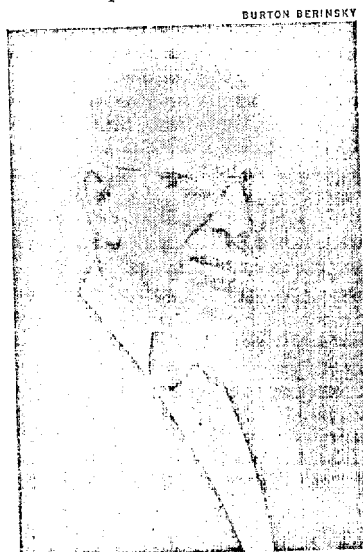
A Whiff of November

By comparison with its heroically productive first session, the performance of the 89th Congress this year seems lackluster. Nonetheless, as Congressmen headed home last week for the Easter recess, they could reasonably claim that they had accomplished virtually all that they had set out to do. The session has set a "good normal record," as Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield assesses it. "It hasn't been sensational, like last year, but it has been solid."

Actually, Congress has kept a lot busier than it ever expected to be when

tide of dramatic legislation so ardently enacted in 1965, there seemed little left to do but pass routine bills to fuel the new multitude of Great Society programs. But then the President's State of the Union message launched a whole new raft of legislative proposals. These, together with Congress' penchant for much-ballyhooed hearings such as its Viet Nam and auto safety inquiries, have kept the Hill ahum. One recent day the House alone held 33 committee and subcommittee meetings, more than on any previous day in memory.

Full Support. More significant, Congress has rallied full support for the U.S. commitment in Viet Nam. It overwhelmingly approved Lyndon Johnson's request for \$13 billion in supplemental war appropriations, enacted L.B.J.'s proposal for a \$1.2 billion increase in auto and telephone taxes to help finance



HOUSE SPEAKER McCORMACK
Solid, but hardly sensational.

the war. Speaker John McCormack succeeded in keeping House Democrats from wavering an inch on Administration war policy, while the Senate's so-called "peace liberals," led by William Fulbright, have proved largely ineffectual.

What most sets the current session apart is a heightened sense of politics. With elections coming up in November, Congressmen have grown understandably edgy not only about Viet Nam but also over inflation and the possibility of tax increases. Congressional Republicans, who wholeheartedly back the U.S. objectives in Viet Nam, have deliberately withheld criticism of the specifics of Administration policy—largely in hopes that they can thus zero in on Democratic divisions over the war as a campaign issue. The G.O.P. also regards itself as the natural political beneficiary of wage-price inflation, insisting for the record, if not by its votes, that the most potent cure would be a cut in domestic spending.

Returned Frugality. Much of Congress' pre-recess energy was directed toward the hardening of party positions. The Senate's Republican minority last week mounted an impressive effort to defeat the proposed transfer of the Commerce Department's Community Relations Service to the Justice Department, fell short by a 42 to 32 vote that displayed unaccustomed G.O.P. solidarity. After barely failing to eliminate \$12 million in rent-subsidy appropriations the week before, the Republican House leadership abandoned attempts at selective pruning, instead touted an across-the-board cut of 5% on all domestic appropriations. Unable to trim bills totaling \$8.4 billion to finance several executive departments, House Republicans restrained their frugal impulses long enough to join unanimously in adding \$109 million to a bill raising federal employees' salaries.

As Congressmen hurried home to gauge the mood of their constituencies, the edgiest of all were the 58 freshmen Democrats who were swept into office in the L.B.J. landslide, and now have to run on their own records. They would also have to take a stand on some highly debatable bills awaiting Congress when it reconvenes, notably to create a Cabinet-level Transportation Department, increase the minimum wage, set fair-labeling standards and inaugurate experimental programs for reconstructing U.S. cities. Regardless of hustings-aimed cries to hold down spending, most major Administration proposals seem likely to become law.

LABOR

Nothing But Trouble

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, a dwindling union that takes in annual dues totaling \$612,000, was bringing on troubles it could ill afford. Its outlaw strike against eight U.S. railroads elicited a contempt citation from U.S. District Judge Alexander Holtzoff in Washington, who ordered the brotherhood to meet a return-to-work deadline or be fined \$25,000 a day. Only after the four-day walkout ground to a halt last week did the full magnitude of the railway union's troubles come into focus.

As a starter, it appeared that the brotherhood had missed the deadline by several hours; so the railroads decided to press Holtzoff to levy the threatened fine. In Georgia, a federal judge who had imposed his own deadline went ahead and fined two union officials \$25,000 each. The railroads meanwhile were plotting damage suits on losses that could total up to \$20 million. Nor did the union win any concessions on the issue over which it had struck: its demand for the restoration of 18,000 firemen's jobs eliminated as obsolete under a federal arbitration ruling. Said Railroad Negotiator J. E. ("Doc") Wolfe: "That issue has been permanently laid to rest."

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